



OSERS TRANSITION DATA FACT SHEET

MAY 2010

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) administers programs that assist in educating children and youths with disabilities, provides funding for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services for youths and adults with disabilities and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. OSERS established the Transition Steering Committee to focus specifically on the services, needs and outcomes of youths with disabilities who may benefit from the work conducted and services delivered by its program components. This committee, also known as the “Transition Tigers,” comprises staff members from each of OSERS component offices—the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)—as well as staff from the Office of the Assistant Secretary’s (OAS) Office of Policy and Planning (OPP).

OSERS provides funds for many transition projects, extensive resources and significant research; however, the committee found that program-specific data about OSERS transition work are not summarized and readily available to OSERS staff across its component offices. To address this need, the committee developed the Transition Data Fact Sheet as a quick reference to help inform OSERS staff about critical data areas related to the transition of youths with disabilities from school activities to post-school activities. For the purposes of this document, “transition” is defined as the passage from school to participating in postsecondary education, training or both, engaging in meaningful employment, living within one’s community, exercising self-determination and contributing to society as productive citizens.

The data are presented specifically for OSERS staff to use in the conduct of their overall work tasks and for staff and others to draw their own conclusions from the data provided. The Transition Data Fact Sheet is intended to be a reference tool and should not be treated as a comprehensive document. It is organized into three areas of emphasis: 1) transition services; 2) post-school outcomes; and 3) federal spending on special education and VR services. It is important to note that most of the data and information presented are primarily specific to youths with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 24.

TRANSITION SERVICES

THE *INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)*

Secondary Transition Services

- ▶ The 2007 Child Count data reported by states under *IDEA*, Sec. 618 shows that 2,275,915 children (ages 14–21) are served under *IDEA* Part B¹ in the U.S. and its territories.
- ▶ The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2)² data shows that during the 2001–02 school year, transition planning activities were conducted for 75 percent of 14-year-old students, 84 percent of 15-year-olds, 91 percent of 16-year-olds and 96 percent of 17- and 18-year-olds enrolled in special education according to school staff completing the survey. Additional data from this survey and school year indicated:
 - The most frequently identified transition planning contacts were made on behalf of students with disabilities to VR agencies (38 percent) followed by colleges (24 percent), postsecondary vocational schools (24 percent) and job placement agencies (24 percent). Mental health agencies were reported as having the fewest contacts (11 percent).
 - Fifty-three percent of students with transition planning activities focused on securing competitive employment. Eight percent of students had a goal of supported employment and 5 percent had the goal of sheltered employment. Other common post-high school goals were to: secure independent living (50 percent), attend a two- or four-year college (47 percent), attend a postsecondary vocational training program (40 percent), enhance social and interpersonal relationships (25 percent) and maximize functional independence (20 percent).

(Cameto, Levine & Wagner, 2004)

¹ The Data Accountability Center, funded by OSEP, provides public access to data about children and youths with disabilities served under *IDEA* Parts B and C; technical assistance materials to support the collection, analysis and reporting of *IDEA* data; and the forms and spreadsheets used for collection. Data retrieved Aug. 12, 2009, from <https://www.ideadata.org/PartBData.asp>.

² The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), funded by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, is a 10-year study that documents the characteristics, experiences and outcomes of a nationally representative sample of 11,000 students with disabilities who were between the ages of 13 and 16 and receiving special education services in the seventh grade or higher in 2001.

- ▶ Approximately three-quarters of child Supplemental Security Income (SSI)³ recipients reported current or past participation in an individualized education program (IEP)⁴ or special education. (Wittenburg & Loprest, 2007)
- ▶ *IDEA* mandates family participation in educational planning. However, in a recent study of family participation in educational planning for children receiving mental health services, 17 percent of families⁵ reported that their family's values and culture were not at all taken into account when planning their children's education and 22 percent reported that their family's needs and circumstances were not at all taken into account. (Jivanjee et al., 2008)

THE *REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973*, AS AMENDED (THE *REHABILITATION ACT*)

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

All data reported in this section are from the RSA-911 report.⁶

Transition-age Youths Referred and Served

- ▶ Of the individuals whose service records were closed by state VR agencies in FY 2008, 203,281 were transition-age youths when they applied for VR services. Of this number, 101,522 transition-age youths (49.9 percent) were referred to VR from elementary and secondary schools. In addition, 8,619 transition-age youths (4.2 percent) were referred to VR from postsecondary schools. Not everyone who applies for VR services initiates services or completes their plan for services.
- ▶ In FY 2008, the total number of transition-age youths whose service records were closed after receiving services from the 80 state VR agencies was 116,544, which represented 32.9 percent of the total number of individuals whose service records were closed that year after receiving services (353,874).

³ Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenues (not Social Security taxes). It is designed to help aged and blind people and those with disabilities who have little or no income, and provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter.

⁴ In general, the term "individualized education program" (IEP) means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting in accordance with Sec. 300.320 through 300.324. For a more detailed explanation of what is included in an IEP, please visit <http://idea.ed.gov> and conduct a search for "300.320."

⁵ Data are from a subsample (N=133) of a national, but not representative, sample of families of youths (up to age 20) who had received three months or more of mental health treatment while living at home, or 30 or more consecutive days of out-of-home treatment.

⁶ The Case Service Report (RSA-911) includes information collected on individuals whose service records have been closed in a given fiscal year. RSA requires all 80 state VR agencies to submit the RSA-911 by December 31 of each year. The data reported here are for transition-age youths who applied for VR services between the ages of 14 and 24 and whose service records were closed after they received VR services under an individualized plan for employment.

VR Service Delivery

- ▶ Reported below are the percentages and numbers of transition-age youths whose service records were closed and the type of services received through VR agencies in FY 2008:
 - Sixty-five percent of transition-age youths served (75,145) received assessment services, while 63.9 percent (74,502) received vocational guidance and counseling services.
 - Twenty-nine percent of transition-age youths served (33,540) received job search assistance, while 35.5 percent (41,382) received job placement services and 20.2 percent (23,490) received on-the-job supports.
 - VR agencies provided 31.0 percent (36,184) transition-age youths with diagnosis and treatment services; 14.1 percent (16,434) with occupational/vocational training; 21.8 percent (25,385) with college or university training; 19.2 percent (22,378) with job readiness training; and 27.4 percent (31,924) with transportation services.
 - The number of transition-age youths who received college or university training services increased from 24,767 in FY 2004 to 25,385 in FY 2008.
 - Of all transition-age youths served, 21.8 percent received postsecondary education. In FY 2008, of all eligible individuals whose service records were closed after receiving VR services and who received postsecondary education, 50.2 percent were transition-age youths.
 - In FY 2008, nearly one-third of transition-age youths served by VR agencies received SSI.

POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES

Secondary Education

Graduation and Dropout Rates⁷

- ▶ Twenty-six percent of students with disabilities, ages 14–21, who left school during the 2006–07 school year, dropped out of school. Fifty-six percent of students with disabilities, ages 14–21, who left school during the 2006–07 school year, exited high school with a regular high school diploma.

Postsecondary Education

- ▶ School program surveys completed by school personnel during the 2001–02 school year indicated that the most frequently identified post-high school service needs of students with disabilities, ages 14–18, who received transition planning services were postsecondary education accommodations (48 percent), vocational services (38 percent), behavioral intervention (6 percent), social work services (6 percent), transportation (6 percent), and supported living (5 percent). Twenty-four percent did not identify a service need. (Cameto et al., 2004)
- ▶ National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) data on postsecondary education collected in 2005 from parents or youths, ages 17–21 and out of high school indicated:
 - Fifty-five percent of postsecondary students who were identified by their secondary schools as having a disability did not consider themselves to have a disability by the time they transitioned to postsecondary school. Thirty-seven percent of postsecondary students with disabilities identified themselves as having a disability and informed their postsecondary schools of their disability.
 - Forty-five percent of youths with disabilities reported having continued on to postsecondary education within four years of leaving high school.

⁷ The Data Accountability Center, funded by OSEP, provides public access to data about children and youths with disabilities served under IDEA Part B and Part C, including data about students with disabilities ages 14–21 served under IDEA Part B who exited school, by disability category, exit reason and state. (Data retrieved May 11, 2009, from https://www.ideadata.org/docs/RankOrderedTables/artbl1_6cs.xls). The calculation of graduation rates used in this document is based on the ratio of the number of students with disabilities graduating with a regular high school diploma and the number of students with disabilities leaving school (students leaving school includes students who graduated with a diploma, received a certificate, dropped out, died, reached maximum age, moved or otherwise not continuing). These data are not necessarily comparable to state-reported graduation and dropout rates from the Annual Performance Report (APR) required under IDEA or the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) required under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (P.L. 107-110). The Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education has issued guidance to provide states, local educational agencies and schools with information establishing a uniform and accurate measure of graduation rates that is comparable across states. It is available at <http://connected.ed.gov/newsletter/index.cfm?id=3&issid=54&secid=652>.

- On average, students with disabilities who continued on to postsecondary school did so within five months of leaving high school. Students with disabilities enrolled in four-year colleges enrolled sooner after leaving high school than they did in postsecondary vocational, business or technical schools (three months vs. seven months).
- Youths with disabilities were reported to be more likely to have enrolled in two-year or community colleges (32 percent) than in vocational, business or technical schools (23 percent) or four-year colleges or universities (14 percent).
- Postsecondary students who attended two-year colleges were more likely to have been enrolled in an academic than a vocational course of study (57 percent vs. 29 percent).
- The gap in postsecondary enrollment between youths with disabilities and those in the general population was most apparent for enrollment in four-year universities (8 percent and 29 percent, respectively). Rates of attendance at two-year colleges for these two groups were not significantly different (13 percent and 12 percent, respectively).

(Newman et al., 2009)

Employment

- NLTS2 data on employment collected in 2005 from parents or youths, ages 17–21 and out of high school indicated:
 - Fifty-seven percent of youths with disabilities who had left high school were employed for pay outside of the home at the time of the NLTS2 interview. In contrast, 66 percent of similarly aged youths in the general population were employed outside the home. A larger majority of youths with disabilities (72 percent) had been employed *at some point* since leaving high school than were working at the time of the interview, which indicates fluctuation in their employment status.
 - About 19 percent of working youths reportedly had employers who were aware of their disability, and 3 percent reported receiving some kind of accommodation on the job. Job accommodations included a range of individual adaptations involving materials or technology used on the job (e.g., Braille, TTY) (14 percent), scheduling accommodations (30 percent), human aides (e.g., interpreters) (41 percent) and adaptations to assignments or supervision (56 percent).

- On average, the jobs held by youths with disabilities were of shorter duration (10 months) than those of youths in the general population (15 months).

(Newman et al., 2009)

- ▶ VR assisted 65,001 transition-age youths ages 14–24 (55.8 percent of the total 116,544 transition-age youths whose service records were closed after receiving services) with achieving employment outcomes in FY 2008. Of the total transition-age population served who achieved employment outcomes, 96.1 percent (62,442) of transition-age youths achieved competitive employment and 12.1 percent (7,895) of these youths achieved supported employment.
- The overall average wage for these transition-age youths increased from \$8.27 per hour in FY 2004 to \$8.96 per hour in FY 2008.
- The overall average hours worked for these transition-age youths decreased from 32.2 in FY 2004 to 31.4 in FY 2008.
- The rehabilitation rate⁸ for these transition-age youths increased from 54.5 percent in FY 2004 to 55.8 percent in FY 2008.

(RSA-911 report)

Independent Living

- ▶ NLTS2 data on independent living collected in 2005 from parents or youths, ages 17–21 and out of high school indicated:
 - Of the 25 percent of youths who had lived independently at some time since high school, 63 percent had lived alone and 38 percent had lived with a spouse, partner or roommate. Of those who had lived semi-independently, 65 percent had lived in a college dormitory and 35 percent in military housing.
 - When youths were asked during the interview about their satisfaction with their current living arrangement, 58 percent reported being satisfied with their residential arrangement, 17 percent reported they would prefer to live elsewhere and 25 percent were ambivalent.
 - Percentages of youths with savings accounts, checking accounts or credit cards varied by disability category. Across categories, 41 percent to 66 percent of

⁸ Rehabilitation rate is the total number of transition-age youths whose service records were closed with employment outcomes divided by the sum of a) the total number of transition-age youths whose service records were closed with employment outcomes and b) the total number of transition-age youths whose service records were closed without employment outcomes after receiving VR services.

youths were reported to have a savings account, 26 percent to 71 percent had a checking account and 9 percent to 51 percent had a personal credit card.

(Newman et al., 2009)

- According to the Centers for Independent Living Annual Reports (RSA-704)⁹, the number of transition-age youths ages 20–24 served by centers for independent living decreased from 14,465 in FY 2006 to 11,996 in FY 2008 (RSA-704 report).

⁹ The Annual Performance Report for Centers for Independent Living (RSA-704) reports resources, allocation of funds, consumer information and services. This report is submitted by December 31 each year.

FEDERAL SPENDING ON SPECIAL EDUCATION AND VR SERVICES

- ▶ The Grants to States program, which is authorized under *IDEA*, allocates formula grants that help states pay the additional costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities aged 3 through 21 years. The program spending level for FY 2009 was \$11.5 billion, making the federal contribution toward meeting the excess cost of special education about 17 percent of the national average per pupil expenditure. The FY 2009 program spending level provided a per-child average of \$1,713 for an estimated 6,718,000 children with disabilities.¹⁰
- ▶ Under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)*, \$12.2 billion were made available for use by local educational agencies (LEAs).¹¹
- ▶ Under *ARRA*, the VR State Grants program received \$540 million with no state match required. In addition, \$18.2 million were made available for Independent Living (IL) formula grants to state agencies to expand IL services, with a 10 percent state match required, and \$87.5 million with no match requirement were allocated for discretionary grants for centers for independent living.
- ▶ In FY 2008, the total cost of purchased services for transition-age youths ages 14–24 whose VR service records were closed was \$530,310,287; the average cost of purchased services per transition-age youth in FY 2008 was \$4,550.30.¹²
- ▶ The total cost of employment outcomes of purchased services for transition-age youths ages 14–24 who were assisted in obtaining employment by VR agencies in FY 2008 was \$374,122,713; the average cost per employment outcome for transition-age youths in FY 2008 was \$5,755.65. (RSA-911).

¹⁰ For a summary of the Grants to States program, see “Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Summary, May 7, 2009: Section III B. Special Education and Rehabilitative Services” (retrieved Aug. 10, 2009, from <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget10/summary/edlite-section3b.html#rehab>).

¹¹ For a summary of *ARRA* funding for state formula grant programs authorized by *IDEA*, see “Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Summary, May 7, 2009: Section II.: The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*” (retrieved Aug. 10, 2009, from <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget10/summary/edlite-section2.html>).

¹² The cost of purchased services is defined as the total money spent by a state VR agency to purchase services for an individual. Information included here is taken from the RSA-911 report.

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